

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 087282

FOLLOWING REPEAT DJIBOUTI 478, SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO
ADDIS ABABA MOGADISCIO MONROVIA OSLO PARIS SANA USUN COMIDEASTFOR
CINCUSNAVEUR 3 APRIL:

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L DJIBOUTI 478

DEPT PASS HORN OF AFRICA COLLECTIVE

MONROVIA FOR RICHARD MOOSE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDIP, MOPS, DLOS, DJ, YN, ET

SUBJ: NOTED EXPLORER RUNS AGROUND ON POLITICAL SHOALS

1. NORWEGIAN OCEANIC EXPLORER THOR HEYERDAHL, NOW IN DJIBOUTI
AFTER A FIVE-MONTH VOYAGE FROM IRAQ ON REED BARGE "TIGRIS", PLANS
MAKE PUBLIC PROTEST TO U.N. SECRETARY GENERAL KURT WALDHEIM TODAY
OR TOMORROW ABOUT HARASSMENT ON HIGH SEAS AND OTHER OBSTACLES TO
LEGITIMATE SCIENTIFIC EXPLORATION. ALTHOUGH EMBASSY HAS NOT SEEN TEXT
OF HEYERDAHL DECLARATION, THE EXPLORER REPORTED TO CHARGE THAT
DURING HIS SHIP'S LAST MONTH, THEY WERE BUZZED BY MARITIME
SURVEILLANCE
AIRCRAFT, INSPECTED BY MISCELLANEOUS NAVAL VESSELS AND MENACED BY
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COASTAL ARTILLERY ON SOCOTRA ISLAND. AS MORE OR LESS LAST STRAW,
EXPEDITION SHIFTED FINAL LANDING FOR "TIGRIS" FROM MASSAWA
(ETHIOPIA) TO HODEIDA (NORTH YEMEN) ONLY TO LEARN IN LAST TWO DAYS
THAT HE NOW FORBIDDEN TO LAND IN YEMEN ARAB REPUBLIC "FOR HIS

PERSONAL SECURITY." IF THIS INTERDICTION PERVALES, THE EXPEDITION
IS EFFECTIVELY OVER.

2. THE INCIDENT AT SOCOTRA OCCURED WHEN WINDS BLEW SHIP INTO SOUTH YEMENI (PDRY) WATERS OFF SOCOTRA. ONLY AFTER INTERVENTION OF SOVIET SPACE PHYSICIAN ABOARD WITH MOSCOW AUTHORITIES VIA RADIO DID YEMENI AUTHORITIES FINALLY AIM THEIR ARTILLERY AWAY FROM THEM AS IT HAPPENED, WINDS CHANGED AT LAST MINUTE AND HEYERDAHL GROUP DID NOT LAND. ALTHOUGH THE NORWEGIAN SCIENTIST DID NOT SPECIFY WHICH NATIONALITIES INVOLVED IN ALLEGED AIR AND SEA "HARASSMENT", WE AWARE THAT AT LEAST ONE RECENT U.S. FLIGHT DID MAKE INSPECTION OF UNIQUE CRAFT.

3. IN LENGTHY CONVERSATION AT DINNER HELD FOR HEYERDAHL AND CREW AT EMBASSY RESIDENCE, HEYERDAHL REVEALED HIMSELF TO BE HUMANIST DEEPLY OPPOSED TO MILITARIZATION, PARTICULARLY IN HORN OF AFRICA. HE STATED THAT HE IS THOROUGHLY IMMERSSED IN A WAY OF LIFE GEARED TO 3000 YEARS B.C., AND HE FINDS IT EXTREMELY ANNOYING TO FIND POLITICAL BARRIERS TO EXPLORATION AND TO BE THE OBJECT OF MULTINATIONAL MILITARY CONCERN. HIS 100-TON REED SAILING BARGE IS MANNED BY HIMSELF AND TEN CREW MEMBERS, WHO REPRESENT NINE NATIONS. IT FLIES THE UNITED NATIONS FLAG

4. COMMENT: WE REALLY DON'T KNOW HOW DETAILED OR HOW BROAD THE HEYERDAHL STATEMENT WILL BE. WE DON'T BELEIVE HE IS GOING TO BE AIMING AT US, SO FAR AS WE CAN TELL. HOWEVER, HIS STATEMENT MAY RECEIVE CONSIDERABLE PRESS PLAY BECAUSE OF THE CONTINUING INTEREST IN THE HORN. WE SUGGEST THAT THE DEPARTMENT PREPARE CONFIDENTIAL

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LOW-KEY PRESS TREATMENT. I THINK THAT WE CAN TAKE INITIATIVE AND AGREE ENTIRELY WITH HEYERDAHL'S CONCERN IN MAINTAINING FREEDOM OF EXPLORATION AND THAT WE ALSO REGRET THAT THE HORN OF AFRICA HAS BECOME THE SCENE OF A MASSIVE MILITARY CONFRONTATION, LARGELY FUELED BY OUTSIDE POLITICAL INTERESTS.

5. NOTE FOR COMIDEASTFOR. THE TIGRIS HAS LARGE OIL-FUELED LANTERN MOUNTED MIDSHIPS ON STARBOARD SIDE AND HAS A NUMBER OF SMALL HURRICANE LAMPS WHICH ARE LIGHTED ON MAIN DECK. IT HAS NEITHER BOW NOR STERN LAMPS. CLARKE UNQUOTE. VANCE

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